

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1 (currently amended): A method for dynamically controlling the sequence of execution of image processing algorithms, without recompiling an image processing computer program, the method comprising:

providing a plurality of image processing elements as self-contained modules which can be executed individually in a plurality of ~~possible~~ different sequences;

providing an image processing chain in a script file capable of execution by a script interpreter in a computer arranged to receive raw image data;

wherein the image processing chain determines a selected sequence of execution of the image processing elements; and

relating the image processing chain to a clinical protocol, which is subsequently executed by the computer while running a compiled image processing computer program to process raw image data.

Claim 2 (currently amended): The method of claim 1, wherein the plurality of image processing elements in an image processing chain are stored in a repository of image processing elements for easy access during image processing chain editing operations.

Claim 3 (original): The method of claim 2, wherein the repository of image processing elements is stored on a memory storage device dedicated to that function and accessible by the computer.

Claim 4 (previously presented): The method of claim 1, wherein the image processing chain is related to any one of a plurality of clinical protocols.

Claim 5 (currently amended): The method of claim 1, wherein the method is carried out by an administration tool comprising a plurality of image processing tools which can be installed on the computer associated with ~~the item of a medical imaging equipment apparatus~~ and executing ~~the~~ an image processing application to process the raw image data into ~~an~~ a processed image that can be displayed on a monitor.

Claim 6 (previously presented): The method of claim 1, wherein the plurality of image processing elements are generated in a tool command language.

Claim 7 (currently amended): The method of claim 1, wherein the image processing ~~chains are~~ chain is generated with a text editor.

Claim 8 (currently amended): The method of claim 1, wherein the raw image data is received from ~~an item of a medical imaging equipment apparatus~~.

Claim 9 (currently amended): The method of claim 8, wherein the medical imaging ~~equipment apparatus~~ is a ~~CT scanner~~ computed tomography (CT) imaging apparatus.

Claim 10 (currently amended): The method of claim 8, wherein the medical imaging ~~equipment apparatus~~ is an ~~MR scanner~~ a magnetic resonance (MR) imaging apparatus.

Claim 11 (currently amended): The method of claim 8, wherein the medical imaging ~~equipment apparatus~~ is an ultrasound imaging ~~machine~~ apparatus.

Claim 12 (currently amended): The method of claim 8, wherein the medical imaging ~~equipment apparatus~~ is an x-ray ~~RAD scanner~~ imaging apparatus.

Claim 13 (canceled)

Claim 14 (canceled)

Claim 15 (canceled)

Claim 16 (currently amended): A method for adding an image processing algorithm to a compiled image processing computer program, without recompiling the image processing computer program, the method comprising:

providing a plurality of image processing elements as self-contained modules which can be executed individually in a plurality of ~~possible~~ different sequences; and

providing an image processing chain in a script file capable of execution by a script interpreter in a computer arranged to receive raw image data;

adding a new image processing element;

configuring the image processing chain to determine the sequence of execution of the image processing elements including the new image processing element; and

relating the image processing chain to a clinical protocol, which is subsequently executed by the computer while running the compiled image processing computer program to process raw image data.

Claim 17 (original): The method of claim 16, further comprising:
modifying the image processing chain using a text editor; and
relating the modified image processing chain to a clinical protocol, which is subsequently executed by the computer while running the compiled image processing computer program to process image data.

Claim 18 (currently amended): The method of claim 17, wherein the method is carried out by an administration tool comprising a plurality of image processing tools which can be installed on the computer associated with ~~the item of~~ a medical imaging equipment apparatus and executing ~~the~~ an image processing application to process the raw image data into ~~an~~ a processed image that can be displayed on a monitor.

Claim 19 (currently amended): The method of claim 16, wherein the plurality of image processing elements in an image processing chain are stored in a repository of image processing elements for easy access during image processing chain editing operations.

Claim 20 (original): The method of claim 19, wherein the repository of image processing elements is stored on a memory storage device dedicated to that function and accessible by the computer.

Claim 21 (new): A method for constructing image processing chains that can be easily edited for addition of new processing algorithms, the method comprising:

- specifying image processing elements in an image processing chain;
- applying the image processing elements in a sequence or in parallel to one or more resulting images to be displayed;
- defining inputs for each image processing element;
- defining outputs for each image processing element; and
- saving output images of different image processing chains.

Claim 22 (new): The method of claim 21, further comprising constructing additional image processing chains from smaller image processing chains, said smaller image processing chains being related in sequence or in parallel.

Claim 23 (new): The method of claim 22, further comprising conditionally applying image processing chains.

Claim 24 (new): A system for constructing image processing chains that can be easily edited for addition of new processing algorithms, the system comprising:

- specifying image processing elements in an image processing chain;
- applying the image processing elements in a sequence or in parallel to one or more resulting images to be displayed;
- defining inputs for each image processing element;
- defining outputs for each image processing element; and
- saving output images of different image processing chains.